

eBook



# Assessing Your IT Inventory: A Checklist for SMEs



# What does it take to inventory your IT assets in a post-COVID world?

On January 1 it is common to write a set of resolutions, even though commitment to those resolutions typically only last 2 to 6 weeks. Why? The problem isn't that they're useless or poorly thought out. It's that there was lackluster preparation done to back up the resolution to begin with.

Nobody could have predicted the mess that was 2020. And 2021 flew by as the world changed, as our businesses changed, as our technology changed. It was a year of tentative decisions and trial and error as everyone was unsure of the landscape of 2021 and how everything would unfold. However, with the end-of-summer events now part of our collective hindsight, it's clear that remote work and hybrid workplaces are our future. This means now is the time to reassess our situation and prepare for how we now work (and manage our stack to support the needs of the organization as a whole).

Any decisions that have to be made for 2022 should be done with care and with vision. This is the time to use your calendar and block out time for developing a year-end strategy, which you can carry out over the next few weeks. That will allow you to gather the information you need to spend the first few weeks of the new year implementing the budgets, strategies, and tactical plans for the year ahead.

Whether you're an internal IT department or an MSP/Consultant, your plan should include changes in hardware and software, as well as additions or consolidation of services, staffing, vendors, performance, and a healthy review of your security program. Because you cannot make these changes in a vacuum, information-gathering has to be the first step.

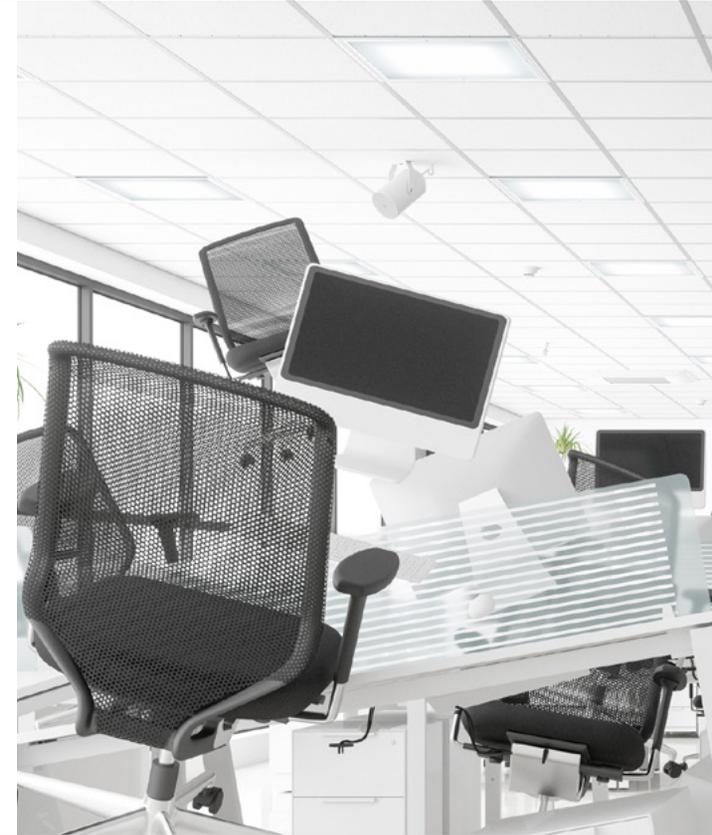
You can't manage what you can't measure—and that means creating visibility. By conducting a systematic, periodic IT inventory assessment, you'll uncover answers to questions like:

- What would you spend money on?
- Who/How would you hire?
- What projects are essential?
- What resources do you have/need to get it done?
- What could you be doing now?

## What's the cost of not taking inventory?

The inventory of today can feel like a scavenger hunt. But failure to do a proper inventory is to risk creating one of the greatest obstacles to operational success facing SMEs today:

- Lack of information of IT assets
- Failure to measure IT investments
- Recurring IT purchases (duplicate applications)
- Ghost IT assets
- Unmanaged licensing processes
- Loss of IT assets



# How to Use This Workbook

In an effort to Make Work Happen® safely and securely for your organization, this workbook is designed to help get you the insight and direction you need to make informed decisions about budgeting, headcount, and overall project prioritization. After you complete your initial exercise with this workbook, you will have:

- A baseline for your current IT stack spanning technology, people, and process,
- An understanding of what you know (and don't know),
- A sense of urgency around where your current stack needs additional resources or visibility.

This workbook focuses on 5 key areas of your environment to take stock of in order to give you a comprehensive overview.

## Physical Inventory

Asset acquisition planning requires a solid inventory of all hardware on hand (in use or in storage). This inventory includes (but is not limited to): desktops, laptops, and mobile devices issued by your department; computer peripherals like webcams, external hard drives, and docking stations; networking equipment and cabling; and in-office equipment like printers, monitors, phones.

## Software Inventory

Various studies report that companies use, on average, between 100 and 200 apps, which affects your company from both a productivity and financial perspective. This inventory includes (but is not limited to): desktop, laptop, and mobile device software issued through IT; software requisitioned by end users through one-off requests; and the software used by your department to monitor and manage your IT environment.

## Cloud Services Inventory

The cloud is both convenient and necessary in a remote, hybrid, or traditional workplace environment. Cloud solutions have often replaced the need for an expansive software inventory for internal use, while also supporting the organization's operations. This inventory includes (but is not limited to): ongoing cloud subscriptions; access management; security controls; and vendor review.

## Security Inventory

You need a list of all instances where company information could be at risk. Without subjecting users to unreasonable requests for information, your dashboards should be able to show you much of this information. This inventory includes (but is not limited to): administrative and technical controls; physical security measures; and ongoing processes and policies.

## User Inventory

Productivity increases when users are happy with their technology. While subjective, this inventory includes (but is not limited to): requests for feedback on technology use; end user support experience; and open dialogue about future improvements.

**With this foundation in place, a strategic plan for the year ahead can be established. A plan like this will empower your organization to:**

- Make good budget decisions for the end of your fiscal year and budget for next year.
- Properly staff and assess your people.
- Answer operation questions, including:
  - If you have leftover budget, will that reduce your budget next year?
  - Should you, for tax reasons, create year-end expenditures?
  - How close are you to the budget you set for FY2021? This workbook will provide tips for creating a more realistic budget for FY22.
  - Which departments will be involved with achieving that goal, and what are their needs?

# Getting Started

This workbook can be a one-time exercise or the beginning of an ongoing effort to stay informed. Regular inventory assessments like these should become a habit, especially if you are lacking automated or digital means to do so. In many cases, you will find aspects of your environment cannot be properly tracked, catalogued, or managed without manual oversight no matter how much you try.

## Follow these steps to get started on your first assessment:

- Print out pages 6 – 21 below (for MSPs, do this for each client),
  - Three-hole punch the printout and place the pages into a binder,
  - Fill out the information on the first page to:
    - Timestamp this assessment for reporting purposes,
    - Determine who is driving and contributing to this internal assessment.
  - Answer the questions on the following pages as they relate to your organization or your client. For each section we've left blanks to capture any questions you know you should account for given your unique environment.
- At the bottom of each section, add up your ratings and divide them by the total number of questions relevant to your environment.
  - Use sticky notes to mark important information or tabs that you want to retrieve quickly.

### As you fill it out, think about the following:

*Do we know the answer?* A simple Yes, No, or Unsure gives you instant feedback on your current status, and what you need to focus on first. If you don't know the answer by heart, but have it stored or calculated somewhere, mark Yes. If the question does not apply, mark N/A.

*How prepared are we to get the answer?* On a scale of one to five, rank how "ready" you are to get the answer to the question at hand. This will give you a sense of the effort involved to complete the assessment. A score of one means the answer is difficult (or impossible) to answer due to a gap in capabilities, lack of visibility, or something else; a score of five means the answer is readily available to anyone who needs it.

*What do we need to know right now?* Context is everything, so use the Notes section to document everything you can think of on these topics. Over time, this context will be essential as you tackle projects aimed at closing the gaps this assessment identified.

## What are the benefits of conducting IT inventory?

Knowledge is power—Do you suspect you need more staffing? Migration to the cloud, MFA adoptions, which you meant to get to last year? Now you know. Conducting a regular IT inventory assessment has multiple benefits, including:

- Cost reduction,
- Increasing procurement efficiency,
- Improving compliance,
- Increasing asset and intellectual property security,
- Reducing financial, contractual, and reputation risk,
- Better positioning to negotiate new contracts.

# What Should You Do With This Workbook When You Are Done?

Assessing your IT inventory will provide you a more comprehensive view of your environment, which will in turn help with your budgeting processes, security and compliance audits, and communication with leadership (or your clients) about the state of IT. The information gained here will set you up to answer the important questions you'll face preparing for the new fiscal year as well, including:

- Where do we see the biggest gaps in our environment? Are they assets to purchase, processes to develop, or headcount needed to support our operations?
- How much effort will it take to fill these gaps? Are they quick projects, quarterly priorities, or full/multi-year initiatives?
- Are we prepared to support the organization next year as it grows?
- What do we need to support the organization as it changes?
- How much money will we need to achieve our objectives for next year?
- Can we use any of our current budget to invest in areas where we have gaps?

This assessment sets a baseline for next year's planning, and will help drive operational success. And, over time, this workbook will help you maintain a historical record of your IT inventory, which can be used to evaluate how well you and your team were able to project, manage, and grow to support your organization's needs.

To Make Work Happen effectively, we want to make your job as an IT professional easier. The tools of this workbook are not meant to be a "silver bullet," but are intended to be used as a springboard for developing your own personalized toolkit for period-end tasks and planning. We are providing you with a way to capture and customize self-assessments and associated notes, which become a crucial part of your strategic planning.

## Tips For Using This Workbook Long Term

**Keep a Record.** Go through this exercise at least semi-annually, if not quarterly. The more often you do it, the less daunting each assessment becomes. You will also be able to capture trends sooner and showcase your progress over time.

**Be Honest.** There's no use exaggerating what you do (or do not) have a handle on. The goal here is to reflect on everything, and base your planning on the areas that need the most help. Use it to determine where you should prioritize your time.

**Learn and Grow.** Use the findings of this workbook as a basis to inform your larger IT strategy; the knowledge (and gaps) found here form the foundation upon which you determine how your program should grow and how you can best support the organization.





ASSESSMENT TIMEFRAME	
Start Date	End Date

<b>Date of Last Assessment</b>	
<b>Assessment Lead</b>	
<b>Assessment Contributors (name all that apply)</b>	
<b>Assessment Scores From Last Assessment (if applicable)</b>	
Physical	
Software	
Cloud Services	
Security	
User	



# Physical Inventory

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	Circle One	Readiness Score 1=least ready, 5=most ready
<b>Is there an asset management system in place?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are all asset-tagged items accounted for?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are there items yet to be tagged?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Do all invoices match up to deployed equipment?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		



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## Circle One

## Readiness Score

1=least ready, 5=most ready

Is an MDM solution in place to manage mobile devices?		
Windows	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
macOS	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Linux	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
iOS/Android	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
Due to employees leaving the organization, are there outstanding:		
Computers	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Phones	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Keycards	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Security Keys	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		



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	Circle One	Readiness Score 1=least ready, 5=most ready
<b>Are all external drives accounted for?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are users using their own hard drives/USB sticks?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are network hardware maps up to date?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Does all network hardware match up to floor plans?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are all ethernet cables in use and mapped?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		



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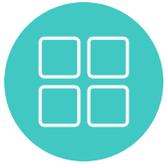
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Notes:		
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Notes:		
	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
	<b>Total Number of Applicable Questions</b>	<b>Sum of Readiness Scores</b>
	<b>Sum of Readiness Scores / Applicable Questions</b>	<b>TOTAL READINESS SCORE</b>
<b>PHYSICAL INVENTORY READINESS SCORE</b>	/	



# Software Inventory

Various studies report that companies use, on average, between 100 and 200 apps, which affects your company from both a productivity and financial perspective. This inventory includes (but is not limited to) desktop, laptop, and mobile device software issued through IT, software requisitioned by end users through one-off requests, and the software used by your department to monitor and manage your IT environment.

	Circle One	Readiness Score 1=least ready, 5=most ready
<b>Are apps used by end users available in an app store?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are apps used by end users procured from the developer?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are all applications current and supported?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Is our approved software list up-to-date?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have a process to vet new software requests?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		



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# Cloud Services Inventory

The cloud is both convenient and a necessity in a remote, hybrid, or traditional workplace environment. Cloud solutions have often replaced the need for an expansive software inventory for internal use, while also supporting the organization's operations. This inventory includes (but is not limited to) ongoing cloud subscriptions, access management, security controls, and vendor review.

	Circle One	Readiness Score 1=least ready, 5=most ready
<b>Do we have a current list of active cloud services?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Have any active cloud services had any user/password/data breaches?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Do the services have or require MFA?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Are we using single sign-on (SSO) for web application access?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		



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	Circle One	Readiness Score 1=least ready, 5=most ready
<b>Do we have a process in place to vet new cloud services?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have a process in place to vet each cloud service's privacy policy, specifically with third-party information sharing?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Have we reviewed each cloud service providers' privacy policies?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		
<b>Within IT, are we paying for services that overlap in functionality?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure   N/A	
Notes:		





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Circle One

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PROGRAM MATURITY		
Have we conducted data classification?	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
Do we have a security strategy outlined following EISP, ISO, or another policy framework?	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
Have risks been classified for mitigation or acceptance?	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
Do we have an incident response (IR) plan?	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
Is our IR plan current?	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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PHYSICAL SECURITY		
<b>Do we have enough keycards for employees to get into the office?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have appropriate locks on the server room?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are switches and other network components secured?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have CCTV or security guards?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is there a guest policy in place?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS		
<b>Do we have an Acceptable Use Policy?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have a disaster recovery plan?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we practice least privilege?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is there job rotation in place or mandatory vacation time?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is a BYOD policy outlined?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS, continued		
<b>Do end users undergo security awareness training?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are there policies for change management?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is there a password/passphrase policy?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have a supply chain policy in place to safeguard against rogue devices and security flaws?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is our IT staff working to obtain security certifications?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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TECHNICAL CONTROLS		
<b>Is anti-virus installed (and current) throughout the fleet?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is an endpoint detection and response (EDR) solution installed (and current)?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is monitoring in place for:</b>		
<i>Laptops/Desktops</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Mobile Devices</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Corporate Network</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Core Infrastructure</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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TECHNICAL CONTROLS, continued		
<b>Do we have a policy around use of multi-factor authentication (MFA)?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Have we implemented an MFA solution?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are conditional access (Zero Trust) policies in place?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have patching policies in place?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are our systems hardened with policies?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is drive encryption enabled?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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TECHNICAL CONTROLS, continued		
<b>Are remote conferencing services encrypted and secured?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are we using boot-sector security features, e.g., TPM?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are we limiting the number of applications installed on our servers?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is firmware on network and embedded devices current?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Is the network properly segmented?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are we using device-level certificates?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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ASSET MANAGEMENT		
<b>Is there a formal off-boarding policy?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are there outstanding hard drives that need to be wiped or destroyed?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are there users who have yet to be off-boarded?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are there unaccounted-for network devices?</b>		
<i>Switches</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>WAPs</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Routers</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Cameras</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
<i>Consoles (Roku/AppleTV/Firestick)</i>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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ASSET MANAGEMENT, continued		
<b>Have we done our quarterly/annual pentest?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Have we done our regular data restore test?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Have users reviewed company security requirements?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Are there any rogue devices attached to any computer?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Have we reviewed hardening options for each policy as it relates to each OS?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		
<b>Do we have a documented strategic security plan?</b>	Yes   No   Unsure	
Notes:		



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/										
<b>SECURITY INVENTORY READINESS SCORE</b>										



# User Inventory

Productivity increases when users are happy with their technology. While subjective, this inventory includes (but is not limited to) requests for feedback on technology use, end user support experience, and open dialogue about future improvements. **Calculate the average response from your pre-issued user survey.**

## Average Intensity Score

1=least intense, 5=most intense

What are the most frequent technology/computer issues reported by users?		
Issue #1		
Issue #2		
Issue #3		
Issue #4		
Issue #5		
Issue #6		
Issue #7		
Issue #8		
Issue #9		
Issue #10		
Issue #11		
Issue #12		
Issue #13		



# User Inventory

Productivity increases when users are happy with their technology. While subjective, this inventory includes (but is not limited to) requests for feedback on technology use, end user support experience, and open dialogue about future improvements. **Calculate the average response from your pre-issued user survey.**

## Average Intensity Score

1=least intense, 5=most intense

What are users happiest about regarding their technology/computers?		
Item #1		
Item #2		
Item #3		
Item #4		
Item #5		
Item #6		
What are the things users most wish to be able to do with technology?		
Wish #1		
Wish #2		
Wish #3		
Wish #4		
Wish #5		
Wish #6		
Wish #7		